

AUG 20 1966

The Washington Merry-Go-Round

By Drew Pearson

Communication

*Paul D. Bethel, executive secretary of the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba, replies to charges made in this column on Aug. 12:*

I wish to correct some of the inaccuracies about the trip to Miami by Sen. Thomas Dodd last September. Pearson-Anderson write: "In September, 1965, Dodd and his assistant, David Martin flew to Miami to interview General Wessin y Wessin, the Dominican strong man, billing the Senate Internal Security Committee \$153.72 each for travel."

Pearson-Anderson go on: "Meanwhile, they had already been furnished plane tickets for the same trip by the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba, which also picked up their hotel bill at the fashionable Eden Roc Hotel on Miami Beach. In addition, the Cubans gave Dodd two more tickets, which he used to bring two sons, Tom Jr. and Jeremy, to Miami with him."

Pearson-Anderson continue: "Dodd simply cashed the ticket the Cubans had given him and pocketed the proceeds. Martin transferred his ticket to his wife's name and brought her to Miami with him." Pearson and Anderson did not check with the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba before they wrote their story, nor did they even check with the Cuban community in Miami.

If they had done so, they would have learned that the Citizens Committee is not Cuban at all. It is an American organization, something which is known to most reporters.

Second, if they had checked their story before writing it, they would also have known that it was not the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba

that invited Senator Dodd to come to Miami, but a Cuban organization called the Cuban Representation in Exile, the RECE.

More important, if they had checked, they would have found that Senator Dodd did not, as charged, cash in the plane ticket sent to him from Miami and "pocket the proceeds." He did not do so for the very simple reason that although the ticket, number 283-365-210, was purchased, it was not used, and the money was refunded to RECE. Thus, Senator Dodd couldn't possibly have pocketed the money, could he?

Furthermore, we didn't "obediently" mail the Senator a check for \$150, as the Pearson-Anderson column has it. The Senator generously insisted on paying for a dinner to which we the Citizens Committee for a Free Cuba, had invited him to attend, while he was in Miami.

As I said in my letter to Senator Dodd, a copy of which is in the hands of the Senate Committee on Standards and Conduct: "I had arranged in advance that the Committee would pay for that dinner Friday night. Your generosity in picking up the bill, and your insistence that you pay it is certainly appreciated. But the account had already been taken care of, so I thought it best to let it go for the moment and then send you back the money."